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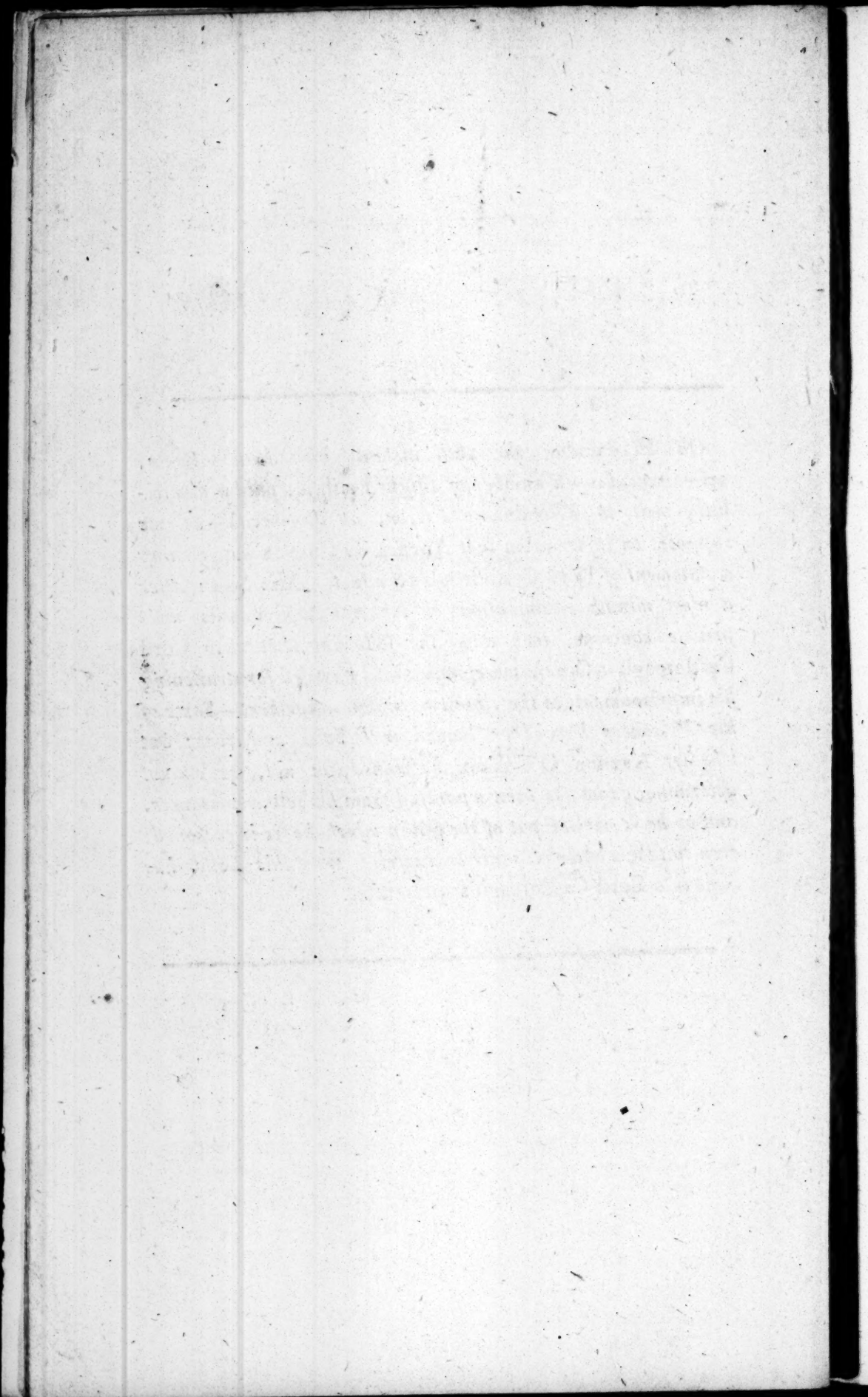
ARTHUR O'CONNOR's

LETTER

Lord Castlereagh.



On Wednesday the 16th instant, Mr. Justice Swan, accompanied by a number of English militia, paid a domiciliary visit to Kilmainham Prison, at day-break—as we suppose, on information that ARTHUR O'CONNOR was writing a statement of Lord Castlereagh's conduct. Mr. Swan, after a most minute examination of ARTHUR O'CONNOR's most private concerns, took away the following Letter to Lord Castlereagh—Orders were immediately issued for straitening his imprisonment to the closest possible confinement—Some of the Prisoners have been loaded with bolts and irons; but whether ARTHUR O'CONNOR be ironed, or not, we cannot determine, as he has been separated from his fellow-prisoners, and as he is not let out of the cell in which he is imprisoned, even to take a moment's air or exercise, since this Letter has come into Lord Castlereagh's possession.



ARTHUR O'CONNOR'S

L E T T E R

TO

LORD CASTLEREAGH.

MY LORD,

WHEN it is considered that five months have elapsed since you undertook to pledge the faith and honor of Lord Cornwallis's administration in a transaction which it shall be the business of this Letter to explain, it cannot be imputed to me, that I have been actuated by any unmanly impatience under the insults, the injuries and the calumnies to which your dishonorable conduct, for a time, has exposed me, or that what I shall say has been the result of passion, and not of the most mature deliberation. I shall first state the transaction, in the order in which it has happened; and then draw such conclusions, and offer such remarks, as will place your conduct in such points of view as that they that run may read.

I will not lose time in ascertaining how or from whom the idea of proposing terms for saving the lives of Bond and Byrne originated; it was a circumstance of which I had no knowledge. On the 24th of July last, Mr. Dobbs and the Sheriff entered my prison with a written paper, signed by seventy State Prisoners, purposing "to give such information as was in their power, of arms, ammunition, and schemes of warfare," (of which it is now manifest they knew little or nothing), "and to consent to leave Ireland, provided

provided the lives of Bond and Byrne (both under sentence of death) should be spared." I refused to sign it, not only from a detestation of entering into any conditions with those who composed the councils of Lord Cornwallis's administration, but because, in the massacre of my unarmed Countrymen still raging, I did not think that any object, which was not general, could warrant me, in whom such confidence was placed by so many millions of my Countrymen, to enter into any such compact, and because the possibility of its being attributed to a desire to save my own life, in the peculiar situation I stood in, was in my mind an insuperable objection, if there had been no other. Besides, it seemed to me, that, to save the lives of Bond and Byrne, enough had signed their self-sacrifice to induce the Ministers, already sated with blood (as you and Lord Clare appeared to be when we met), to acquiesce: But in this I was deceived; a Council sat on the fate of Byrne—he was executed. In this barter of blood, although you had lessened your quantum by half, yet you raised your demands for the price of the other, and proposed to those who had signed the paper, *that they should deliver up names.* The heroism and utter contempt with which so many thousands of my brave Countrymen had met death in preference to life, and those profuse rewards they were pressed to accept to betray their associates, and the unparalleled fortitude with which they endured the most excruciating tortures, not only at *Beresford's Riding-house, Sandys's Prevot, the old Custom-house, and the Royal Exchange*, but those torturings and lashings which resounded in every hamlet throughout the nation, rather than violate the principles to which they had sworn, should have deterred you from offering a proposition so truly dishonorable. You may enjoy all the satisfaction your heart can reap from being the author of such a proposal; whilst the expression of the contempt and abhorrence with which it was rejected, rests with those to whom you proposed it.

Immediately after this base proposition had been retracted—on the eve of Bond's execution, (a beloved friend, whom I myself had brought into the undertaking)—surrounded with the horrors of a charnel-house, where, day after day, I had seen the companions and friends of my heart dragged before some tribunal or other, "*from whose bourn no traveller returns,*" whilst not an hour that was not the messenger

messenger of some direful disasters, wherein my Countrymen, without leaders, ammunition or arms, continued the victims—thus environed with horrors, it was intimated to me, that, at the Council which had sat on the fate of Byrne, the parties had been nearly balanced—those who were sated with the blood that had flowed, and those that were not; that the latter, who had been triumphant in the case of Byrne, had made my consenting to sacrifice myself a *sine qua non*; and that my compliance would incline the balance in favour of the party which had declared against shedding more blood, of which party Lord Cornwallis was not only the head, but that he was the father of this sentiment to which a part of the Council now professed to be converts. How far this intimation was fact, it was impossible for me to ascertain: But whether I considered the extent and value of the object, in putting a stop to that indiscriminate massacre of a disarmed People, the truth of which, though not the extent, has been so fully proved by some of those inquiries which have been made by Lord Cornwallis, so much to his credit; or whether I considered it as affording my Countrymen an opportunity to make their retreat from an effort, not worse conducted than it had been unwisely concerted, as putting a stop to those horrible tortures so universally practised to extort confession—it appeared to me as holding out advantages too considerable for my beloved Countrymen, to authorise me, in the first instance, to decline holding an interview with the Irish Government, to try how far any sacrifice I could make, consistent with honor, could enable me to obtain objects so devoutly to be wished. With this view, I yielded to the solicitations which were made to me, to undertake to make terms for the Country with those in whose hands the Government was vested. I consented to meet you, for this purpose; but foreseeing that the misrepresentations and falsehood which have been practised, would be attempted, I expressly stipulated, that some men upon whose honor I could rely, should accompany me—EMMET and M'NEVIN were accordingly joined with me, upon the part of the State Prisoners. A short time after we had been in one of the lower apartments in the Castle, you entered, when I accosted you with stipulating that we should have the right of publishing, in order to secure us from calumny; you then requested that we would consent to the Chancellor's being

being present; Mr. Cooke made a third on the part of Government—as I suppose, in his official capacity. When we were all assembled, the first demand I made was, “that I might not be required to sign any conditions with the Irish Government, but that I might be brought to trial upon whatever evidence could be produced against me; and that whatever quarter Government might give to a disarmed People, might be granted without forcing me to sacrifice myself for an equivalent.” *This you would not assent to;* which convinced me that it was pre-determined, as I had been informed, that my devoting myself was made a *sine qua non*, and that, without it, the system of blood would still be triumphant. I told you, you had no evidence whatsoever against me; *which you did not deny.*

Having put it beyond doubt, that a regard for self or for life had no share in the part I was now forced to adopt to save the blood of my Countrymen, and that I was throwing myself between them and the persecution to which they still were a prey, my next concern was to make the terms as wide as I could. To this end, I observed, that as the information I should condition to give might be made a subject for grounding a charge of constructive treason against the whole Union, as had been attempted so widely in England, I could not consent to give any information whatever, unless I was assured that no more blood should be shed for any thing that had passed in the Union. The Chancellor affirmed, that constructive treason was law, and that, if his advice had been followed, every member of the Union would have been prosecuted for treason: To which I replied, that he must have prosecuted the People of Ireland to extermination, as nearly the whole population was of the Union against which he was to draw his bill of indictment ---a fact from which neither you nor the Chancellor could withhold your assent. In answer to my demand of an amnesty, you assured me that Government would not shed any more blood for any act hitherto done in the Union, except for murder, which you did not suppose I would wish to have excepted; but that, though you would assure me that no more blood should be shed, you would not consent that we should have any part of the credit. Convinced, from every information we had obtained, that the murders which had been committed upon the People were beyond all comparison more numerous than those
which

which had been committed by them, and being equally abhorrent of murder, be the perpetrators of what side they may, we assured you that we were desirous that murderers of no side should receive any quarter; and as to the credit of putting a stop to the farther effusion of the blood of my Countrymen, I did not contend for what you called the credit, I contended only for that performance for which we were to give the equivalent. You then asked, if it was to be understood that the information we might give, in consequence of the agreement into which we were going to enter, was to be given as our's, or whether we would insist on its being given generally, without specifying by whom it was given? To this we answered, that we insisted on the right of publishing the whole of whatever information we might give, whether verbal or written, (a right I had set out with securing)---specifying particularly, that if any calumnies or misrepresentation should be published against us, we should be free to refute them.

Having done all in my power to procure a trial, and to avoid entering into any conditions with the Government—having put it beyond all doubt, that what they called their mercy, was to be purchased at my expence, I desired to see Lord Cornwallis, on whose character as a man of strict honor we relied for the religious fulfilment of the conditions. This you evaded, assuring me that it was of no consequence how loosely the agreement was worded; that Lord Cornwallis's honor was pledged to us for the religious performance; and Lord Clare made use of these remarkable expressions—"It comes to this—either you must trust the Government, or it must trust you; a Government which could violate engagements thus solemnly made, neither could stand, nor deserved to stand"; whilst you followed up his declaration with the strongest assurances, that the whole of what had been agreed to, should be observed, on the part of the Government, with the greatest liberality and good faith.

Thinking it was impossible that such solemn assurances could be made, to be so soon and so grossly violated, and seeing how difficult it would be to reduce the whole of the conditions to writing, so as to express all our stipulations, without making it appear what title you had to the *credit* you claimed for stopping the effusion of blood, which was the great object for which I had devoted myself—leaving

the stipulations to the religious observance, liberal construction and good faith to which you had so solemnly pledged Lord Cornwallis's honor, the following was drawn up :
 " That the undersigned State Prisoners, in the three prisons of Newgate, Kilmainham, and Bridewell, engage
 " to give every information in their power, of the whole
 " of the internal transactions of the United Irishmen ; and
 " that each of the Prisoners shall give detailed information
 " of every transaction that has passed between the United
 " Irishmen and Foreign States ; but that the Prisoners are
 " not, by naming or describing, to implicate any person
 " whatever : And that they are ready to emigrate to such
 " Country as shall be agreed on between them and Government, and give security not to return to this Country
 " without the permission of Government ; and not to pass
 " into an enemy's country, if, on their so doing, they are
 " to be freed from prosecution ; and also Mr. Oliver Bond
 " be permitted to take the benefit of this proposal. The
 " State Prisoners also hope, that the benefit of this proposal may be extended to such persons in custody, or not
 " in custody, as may choose to benefit by it."

" 29th July, 1798."

(Signed by 73 persons.)

The last sentence was added, to mark that more was conditioned for than could be expressed.

Pursuant to this agreement, at the instance of government, EMMET, M'NEVIN, and I, drew up a Memoir containing thirty-six pages, giving an account of the origin, principles, conduct and views of the Union, which we signed, and delivered to you on the 4th of last August. On the 6th, Mr. Cooke came to our prison, and, after acknowledging that the Memoir was a perfect performance of our agreement, he told us that Lord Cornwallis had read it, but, as it was a vindication of the Union, and a condemnation of the Ministers, the Government and Legislature of Ireland, he could not receive it, and therefore he wished we would alter it. We declared we would not change one letter ; it was all true, and it was the truth we stood pledged to deliver. He then asked us, if Government should publish such parts only as might suit them, whether we would refrain from publishing the Memoir entire ? We answered, that, having stipulated for the liberty of publication, we would use that right when
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and as we should feel ourselves called on : To which he added, that if we published, he would have to hire persons to answer us—that then he supposed we would reply, by which a paper-war would be carried on without end between us and the Government. Finding that we would not suffer the Memoir to be garbled, and that the literary contest between us and these hirelings was not likely to turn out to your credit, it was determined to examine us before the *secret* committees, whereby a more complete selection might be made out of the Memoir, and all the objectionable truths, with which it was observed it abounded, might be suppressed. For the present I shall only remark, that of one hundred pages, to which the whole of the information I gave to the Government and to the secret committees amounts, *only one page has been published*. After the reports were nearly finished, M'NEVIN asked you, on the 11th of August, if you were convinced that we had fulfilled our part of the conditions? You acknowledged that we had, most fully. He then requested that you would perform your part: You replied that no time should be lost, and that you would be glad to have a conversation with us, to adjust the manner in which it should be carried into effect; but having neglected to call, M'NEVIN wrote you the following letter:—

“ MY LORD,

“ However anxious my fellow-prisoners and myself are to be relieved from our present disagreeable situation, we have forborne to trouble Government with it, until the Committees should have reported, or we have been examined; but as the season is advancing, and that we shall want some time to settle our affairs, I am desired by my companions, and encouraged by your Lordship's obliging offer on Saturday, of a conversation on the subject, to request you would do us the honor of naming, for that purpose, the earliest time that may be convenient to you.

“ I have the honor to be, &c. &c. &c.

“ 17th August, 1798.

“ WM. J. M'NEVIN.”

The day following, Mr. Secretary Cooke came to our prison, and told us he came on the part of Government to fulfil their agreement, with the good faith and liberal construction

struction they were pledged to ; that we were at liberty to go where we pleased, provided we left the British dominions—that whatever parts of the conditions concerned us after our having passed into exile, would be secured by act of parliament—that, therefore, the only part which remained to be settled, was the nature of the accommodation we should require, to enable us to dispose of our property prior to our departure. Here was a full and unequivocal declaration of the conditions, for the performance of which you had pledged Lord Cornwallis's honor, delivered to us by Mr. Secretary Cooke in his official capacity, one of those who was present when the agreement was made, and now sent expressly by you to define it. Immediately after the Committees had reported, but before their reports had been printed, the newspapers (notoriously, by their own declaration, under your absolute dominion) inserted the most impudent falsehoods with respect to what we had sworn, and in many respects they went even farther than the reports. As to the reports, however, we could have waited until we had read them ; and then we would have published the whole of what we had delivered, leaving the world to judge how far the facts we had stated, or those vouched for by the Committees, were most worthy of credit. We published a contradiction of those scurrilous falsehoods which appeared in the newspapers, adding, that by our agreement, *we were not, by naming or describing, to implicate any person whatever.* The manner in which this was taken up by those men who sat in the House of Commons of Ireland, is upon record, and will form a precious morsel for the future historian of that illustrious body : I am not now writing their history ; I am detailing your conduct.

Conscious as you must have been, that, in contradicting those infamous falsehoods, we were doing no more than exercising a right for which we had strictly conditioned, why did you not come forward in that fair and honorable manner, to which a regard for truth, for the House, and for your own honor, so imperiously bound you, and avow the existence of your stipulations with us for publication, and of our written agreement, somewhat of which, on the second day, the House learnt from its being published by General Nugent at Belfast ? You did neither one thing nor the other ; but you did that which convinced the discerning part of the world, that there was something which you dare
not

not avow, nor yet dare disclaim: but, although you had neither the spirit or honor to defend your own stipulations, you had the meanness to censure; and, to fill up the measure of the perfidious part you had acted, you sent one of those very men to my prison, whose hands were reeking with the blood of my beloved, valued, ***** friend, EDWARD'S precious blood! for which, in those times of stalking butchery, not even the semblance of an inquisition has been had! This was the Mute you sent with orders to circumscribe my prison to the still narrower limits of a cell. For two months, these orders were varied with the most fantastical absurdity; but all with a view to make a prison more irksome, adding wanton cruelty to the basest perfidy.

The next act, which followed close on the heels of this, was your declaration that you had reserved a power to detain us during the war....a power not only repugnant to the wording of the written agreement, loosely as it was drawn, but to the interpretation you yourself had so lately given by Mr. Cooke....a power which was a direct violation of that liberal construction and good faith so often and so solemnly promised. As Mr. Cooke had been the bearer, a few days before, of the real conditions, a fresh character was thought necessary; accordingly Mr. Marsden was the messenger of this gross infraction of all that had gone before. Having now passed all bounds of honor and truth, no wonder you should shudder at publication: a Bill was to be brought into Parliament, said to be conformable to an agreement, which, according to Lord Clare, "a government that could violate, neither could stand, nor deserved to stand." You are the Minister who furnished the facts to the Parliament; and if gross and palpable falsehoods have been delivered, you are that Minister who has dared to deceive them. It is asserted in this Bill, in which I find my name in company with eighty-nine others, "that I had confessed myself conscious
 " of flagrant and enormous guilt, expressed contrition, and
 " humbly implored mercy, on condition of being trans-
 " ported, banished, or exiled, to such foreign country, as
 " to his Majesty, in his royal wisdom, shall seem meet." On reading this Bill, shortly after it was brought into the House, not one of the ninety, whose names are inserted, that was not astonished at these unfounded assertions; and before it was passed, NEILSON wrote the following letter to the Editor of THE COURIER:

SIR,

" SIR,

" Having seen, in your paper of the 16th instant, a publication, purporting to be a copy of the Bill now in its way through the Irish Parliament, relative to the emigration of ninety persons in custody under charges of high treason, which states that they had acknowledged their *crimes*, retracted their *opinions*, and *implored pardon*, I thought myself peculiarly called upon to set you right, by inclosing to you a copy of the compact, as settled between us and the Government, which cannot by any means authorise such a statement: None of us, so far as I know, did either acknowledge a crime, retract an opinion, or implore pardon ; ...our object was, to stop an effusion of blood.

" I am, Sir,

" Your obedient, humble servant,

" New Prison,

" SAMUEL NEILSON."

Dublin, 12th Sept. 1798.

The copy of the above was inclosed to you, in the following letter :

" MY LORD,

" Feeling, in common with my fellow-prisoners, extremely hurt at a publication which tends to brand our names with infamy, I think it incumbent on me, who commenced the negociation, to justify our characters and motives, by setting the whole in a true point of view ; at the same time, wishing to pay all due respect to Government, I trouble you with a copy of the letter which I mean to send by this night's post. I also take the liberty of sending you the newspaper, with the offensive passages underscored.

" I am, &c.

" 12th Sept. 1798.

" SAMUEL NEILSON."

" To Lord Castlereagh."

In a day or two, NEILSON inclosed the two preceding letters in the following, which he wrote to one of the prisoners of Kilmainham :

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" About two hours after I sent the inclosed letters to Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Cooke, and a gentleman whom I did not know, but believe to be Mr. Marsden, called here,
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and sent up for me. I met them. Mr. Cooke had the letter in his hand. "Why, Mr. Neilson, are you losing your judgment altogether?" "No, Sir; you took that from me some time ago." "But, in earnest, will you publish or not?" "I will." "Well, then, I am commanded by his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant to tell you, that he will consider its publication an infraction of the whole negotiation, and executions will go on as formerly." "Pray, Sir, how is it possible we can let our names go to the world and to posterity, branded with infamy?" "I see, Mr. Neilson, what actuates you; it is a feeling for the honor of your fellow-prisoners and their friends." "It is." "*Well, have you no feeling for their lives? for we can convict the most of you.*" "I do not care this moment you would order me to be hanged." "Very true; but are all the rest of the prisoners of the same opinion?" "I suppose not, but they can never in justice incur the resentment of Government for my act." "I once more assure you, it will be considered as an infraction, and we will act accordingly."

"Yours, &c.

"SAMUEL NEILSON."

The Septemberizing style of these menaces, would astonish in any other country than mine——

———Alas! poor Country!

Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be called our mother, but our grave; where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rend the air,
Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy: the dead men's knell
Is there scarce ask'd, for whom; and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or ere they sicken!

I am now stating facts; by and by I will offer some comments. On the 25th of September I wrote to Lord Cornwallis, demanding the fulfilment of the engagements to which you had pledged him: After nearly a month had elapsed, on the 21st of October, I received a letter from Mr. Cooke, informing me that we should emigrate to America, and that we should be obliged to give security not to return to Europe. This was the third interpretation of the agreement, a direct violation of the written compact, and totally different from those terms of which Mr. Cooke had been

been the bearer ; yet, the very next day, Mr. Marsden came to our prison, to tell us that the whole purport of the letter we received the day before, was all revoked, and that, in a few days, a fifth interpretation would be notified to us by Government. After six weeks had elapsed, we received the fifth interpretation of the agreement, in a scroll of your writing, brought here by Mr. Marsden, of which the following is a literal copy :

“ Samuel Neilson, Henry Jackson, Arthur O'Connor, Miles Duigenan,
 “ Thomas Russel, Matt. Dowling, John Sweeny, John Cormick,
 “ Tho. A. Emmet, John Sweetman, Hugh Wilson, Deane Swift.
 “ W. J. M'Nevin, Joseph Cuthbert, John Chambers,

“ The above persons cannot be liberated at present: the
 “ other State Prisoners named in the Banishment Bill, will
 “ be permitted to retire to any neutral country on the conti-
 “ nent, giving security not to pass into an enemy's country.
 “ A pardon, conformable to the Banishment Bill, will be
 “ passed previous to their departure. The Lord Lieutenant
 “ will be glad to extend this indulgence to the Prisoners
 “ now excepted, as soon as he can do it consistent with the
 “ attention which he owes to the public safety, and laments
 “ that a change of circumstances has rendered the present
 “ precaution necessary.”

Here all respect for all former conditions is laid by, and a State necessity is made the pretext, which, if admitted as a justifiable plea for breach of engagement, at once destroys every principle of good faith, honor, or justice.

Now that I have recited the principal facts, I shall proceed to a recapitulation. Having stated that I forced you to an acknowledgment that you had no evidence against me, that I demanded a trial upon whatever shadow of evidence you could find, and that you would not grant one—having stated that, placed in the excruciating alternative of subjecting myself to be calumniated as one who had betrayed my Countrymen with a view to save my own life, when I was really sacrificing myself to save theirs, or, should I decline this, to be calumniated as one who would not consent to devote himself to save his country's blood—driven to this cruel situation by you, and which the critical state of my Country obliged me to decide on ; in the face of God and of the world I ask you, with what truth, with what justice, with what honor, have you dared to represent me to the world, as a man “ who had confessed himself conscious of
 flagrant

flagrant and enormous guilt, as one who had expressed contrition, and humbly implored his Majesty's mercy?" Gracious God! would it not be supposed that a Minister who delivered such facts to a Parliament and to the world, had some one document upon which he could found such assertions, which went directly to blast the honor and character of so many men? Nay, will it be believed, that every one of those daring assertions has been made in direct opposition to every word that was uttered and every line that was written by those men who are thus vilely calumniated? I challenge you to produce a syllable that has come from me, verbal or written, which can be tortured into a confession of a consciousness of guilt, an expression of contrition, or an imploring of mercy. Read the Memoir I signed and delivered to you—is there a word that can warrant it? So directly is the contrary the truth, that it is expressly set forth in the Memoir, that we would never abandon the principles upon which we had acted. When you made these false and daring assertions of *guilt*, *contrition*, and *mercy*, had you so soon forgotten, that you had sent us the Memoir to alter, because it contained a vindication of the United Irish, and a condemnation of the Ministers, the Government and the Legislature? Or had you forgotten, that we had refused, in the most positive terms, never to alter a letter? Was it because I requested not to be forced to sign any compact with Government, and that I demanded a trial, and that you would not grant it, that you have represented me as one who had most humbly implored his Majesty's mercy? With what truth have you talked of extending mercy to me, or of the gratitude I owe for the mercy I have experienced, when it is a fact you cannot deny, that you forced me to devote myself to procure conditions for others? Ask Mr. Cooke of the diabolical means he has used to procure evidence against me, by abusing the name and influence of a relative to a purpose at which the most unnatural relative would shudder. Ask those underlings, of the enormous sums that have been offered, to supply the place of that evidence you could never obtain. Commence an inquiry into the orders by which those shots were fired when I was confined in the Castle; and examine the wife of the gaoler—she will tell you of a third attempt being made, of which her being in child-birth prevented her giving evidence at Maidstone; she will tell you of the money she saw paid, by one of the

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King's messengers, to the assassin! Are these the acts of mercy for which I am so deeply indebted? When you have considered these facts, read the agreement, and say, in what instance does it imply a consciousness of guilt, an expression of contrition, or most humbly imploring mercy!

But these are not the only instances in which you stand detected of having dared to advance the most palpable falsehoods. The words in that part of the agreement which has been committed to writing, are, "*and that they are ready to emigrate to such country as shall be agreed on between them and Government.*" With what truth, then, have you informed the Parliament, "*that we had humbly implored his Majesty's pardon, on condition of being transported, banished, or exiled, to such foreign country as to his Majesty shall seem meet?*" When the written compact could so easily be produced to the world, (nay, when it had been published by General Nugent), in which it is expressly conditioned, that the country to which we were to emigrate should be one mutually agreed on between us and Government, is it not astonishing that any Minister could be hardy enough to inform the Parliament, that we had conditioned to be *transported, banished, or exiled, to such country as the King shall think meet!*

Having fastened those unparalleled falsehoods on their author, I dare you to make your defence. Tell the world, how demanding a trial, and a refusal on the part of the Government, in a country *said to be free*, can be construed into *humbly imploring mercy!* Tell the world, how the most positive assertion of the firmest adherence to the principles upon which I had acted, and the most direct refusal to retract a particle of the assertion, can, by any force of language, be converted into a confession of conscious guilt, or an avowal of contrition! A convict of these unblushing breaches of truth, can it be matter of wonder that you should shudder at publication? Can it be matter of wonder, that, advanced too far to retreat, and impelled to violate truth in every other particular, you should feel yourself forced to violate the right of publication, for which I so expressly conditioned? or that, irretrievably criminal, and tremblingly alive to detection, you should send Mr. Cooke, in Lord Cornwallis's name, with that murderous menace, that if any of the Prisoners "*should, from a feeling for the honor of their fellow-prisoners, their friends, or themselves,*" attempt

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to contradict those falsehoods and calumnies which you had dared to advance, *executions should go on as formerly?* Can the most REGULAR Government that has ever appeared upon earth, exhibit such another instance of distributive injustice? Is this a part of that clemency which you say I have experienced? Is this a specimen of that mercy for which you have asserted I am so much indebted?

Deeply as these glaring infractions of every thing that should be dear to a man who valued his honor, interested you in resisting publication, there were other calumnies, which could never have been attempted to be palmed on the most credulous, had I been allowed to refute them. Had the facts been given to the world, the Minister of England could never have enjoyed those malignant and scurrilous calumnies which have been disseminated, here and in England, of the Opposition who gave evidence on my trial at Maidstone, by means of those *Antetruth*, prostitute prints, upon which such enormous sums are lavished to panegerize corruption, and to assassinate the characters of those who oppose it. Believing, as I do in my soul, that this calumination of the Opposition of England has been one of the principal reasons why the stipulation I made for publication has been violated with so much injustice and menace, I feel myself peculiarly called on to set forth the truth, in vindicating myself from having given the smallest grounds for these calumnies, which have been propagated, with so much malignity, against men so truly honourable, and so justly revered. I was arrested at Margate, and prosecuted at Maidstone, on a charge of inviting the French to *an invasion of England*; to substantiate which, a written paper was produced, said to have been found in a great-coat pocket, said to be found in a public-house, in a room in which there was no one, said to be the property of Coigly. This paper purported to come from some secret committee, of whom no account has been given: it contained an invitation to the French to *invade England*, and a most infamous, unmeasured proscription of the whole Opposition, as men wholly unfit to be trusted. . . In order to exculpate myself from having any concern in inviting the French to invade a country of which I was not a native, and where I had been received by thousands of the most distinguished, not only with the greatest hospitality, but with the most affectionate kindness.....As the foremost for rank, fortune, talents

talents and virtue, were those against whom this infernal paper had denounced this unqualified proscription, I called upon them to declare to the world, whether they believed I was that monster who had attempted to assassinate those venerated characters, that had honoured me with their society, blessed me with their friendship, and enlightened me with their instruction. The enormity of the charge was, that I had most basely betrayed these kind benefactors; and to those very men I appealed for my justification. The testimony they bore was, "that they were convinced I was incapable of the diabolical treachery, contained in the paper, with which I was charged; that so far were they from conceiving such perfidy formed any part of my character, that I was of an open, unreserved disposition; and that my principles were those of the Revolution of 1688, which were their own." That I have impeached this testimony since, by what has fallen from me, has been propagated by every perversion of truth which malignity and falsehood could invent; but these are the mists of the moment, which vanish on the appearance of truth. Deal fairly by those honorable men, and by me: I dare you to the test; and, in the presence of God and Truth, I call on you to publish the whole of what has come from me, verbal and written;—then let me be ranked lower than the lowest, lower than the exposure of these detailed breaches of honor shall rank you in the estimation of every honest man, if, after the publication, those honorable men, who gave evidence at my trial at Maidstone, would not be bound, in truth and justice, to give the same evidence they gave before. Nay, so unequivocally has every word that came from me, since my trial, put it beyond the possibility of doubt that I was utterly guiltless of every particle of the indictment, that if the whole of what came from me had been made public as the sun in its meridian, I would defy the most sanguinary of my persecutors, from the man whose memory is a sponge for every thing that could make for innocence, and an indelible tablet for every malignity that could make against it, to the pampered informer, whose tongue outstrips the office of his ears, and who, when he casts up the ledger of his perjuries in his murderous account, can tell you all he is worth, to adduce a single fact that could stand between me and an acquittal.

The first part of this evidence I shall notice, is that which respects

respects the paper which contains the unqualified proscription of these great and good men, and the invitation of the French to invade England. In declaring their conviction that I was utterly incapable of thus perfidiously proscribing them, no one can doubt their sincerity. If they could have supposed me to have been capable of such perfidy toward them, they must have been the last men living who could have found inclination or interest in bearing testimony of my innocence. Will their calumniators assert, that they were convinced I had been to them this perfidious friend? and will they also accuse them of the more than Christian forgiveness, in proving my innocence? Thus calumny itself is driven to admit, that the Opposition must have been convinced of my innocence of this part of the paper which proscribed and betrayed them. How, then, was it possible they could conceive that I was guilty of the other part, which invited the French to the invasion of England? Was it in the nature of things that they could believe me to hold one part of the paper in the utmost abhorrence, and approve of the other, and be the author, or have any part in being the bearer of the entire. Thus the contents of this paper, which in fact comprises the whole of the charge in the indictment, if examined with the smallest attention, must carry conviction, that the Opposition regarded me as one of the last men who could have been guilty. If, however, there had been any doubt, my examination since, has put it beyond all suspicion. These are my words before the Secret Committee of the Commons, which I set down to writing the instant I came back to my prison. After stating my having formed the first alliance that ever existed between the Union and France in August 1796, and that I had arranged the expedition with General Hoche, which sailed in the December following for Ireland, I stated, "that it
 " was proposed to me that a body should be sent against
 " England, to cause a diversion, and to retaliate for the
 " Quiberon expedition. To dissuade the French from the
 " invasion of England, I* used every argument in my
 " power: I said, from my knowledge of England, I was
 " certain the best men in it would be most hostile to any
 " interference of the French in the government of their

* In the examination I spoke of myself in the third person, but so as to be understood to mean myself; and so the Secret Committee has taken it.

" country,

“ country, on the same just principle, that they condemned
 “ the interference of England in the government of France;
 “that the state of England and of Ireland were very
 “ different; that in Ireland the People were most solicitous
 “ to rescue themselves from foreign and domestic tyranny,
 “ but that the majority of the people of England would be
 “ most adverse to their interference;....that many of the
 “ People of England were beginning to see and to feel the
 “ ruin which the Ministers had brought on the nation by
 “ engaging in the war; but that, if an invasion was attempted,
 “ all consideration of the injustice of the war would be
 “ buried under the immediate consideration of self-defence;
 “ —that it would prove the greatest support to an unpopu-
 “ lar Ministry, by giving them an unlimited power over
 “ the remaining wealth of England, in any way they might
 “ think fit to take it, while a guinea could be extorted.
 “ These, together with other arguments, were thought
 “ conclusive by those to whom I addressed them; and the
 “ invasion of England in 1796 was abandoned.” And
 again, before the Secret Committee of the Lords, on the
 6th of September, after pointing out some mis-statements
 which had been made of the examination I had given, as
 published in the Appendix to the Report, on being asked
 if there was any other inaccuracies in the Report, of my
 examination in this Appendix, I answered, “ Yes; I have
 “ expressly stated, that the Union had no connexion with
 “ the Societies of England and Scotland, and yet my an-
 “ swer is so worded as if I admitted that some con-
 “ nexion was supported by individuals; this appears to me
 “ to have been done, to give a colour to that charge, in a
 “ paper produced at Maidstone against me, which states
 “ that a Delegate from Ireland was then sitting with a
 “ Secret Committee of England, every particle of which
 “ I do declare most solemnly was most false, as I do also
 “ declare, that every part of the indictment, as far as I was
 “ concerned, was wholly unfounded; for, so far was I from
 “ seeking an invasion of England, that when it was propos-
 “ ed to the Irish negociator (who formed the first alliance
 “ between Ireland and France) to invade England, and to
 “ retaliate for the Quiberon expedition, he used every ar-
 “ gument in his power to dissuade them, which I know
 “ were conclusive. I state this, because I find that, while
 “ I have been imprisoned, occasion has been taken to
 “ calumniate

“calumniate those who gave evidence on my trial at Maidstone; and therefore I wish it to be known, that instead of my inviting the French to invade England, I prevented it; and I did so, because I knew the best men there, were as averse to the interference of the French in England, as they had uniformly declared themselves to be to the interference of the English in the government of France.”

These are faithful extracts of those examinations, which, it has been said, impeaches the evidence given at Maidstone. Is there one word which can warrant such an assertion? Is it in the power of language to convey a stronger corroboration of their testimony, or a more direct exculpation from every part of the charge contained in the indictment? Had I not been prevented from refuting these infamous calumnies, the People of England would have been informed, that the man who had been charged with inviting the French to invade them, was the man who averted that event from them; and that he succeeded by stating, how repugnant such an attempt would be to the principles and wishes of those very men, who have been so grossly maligned, and how advantageous it would prove to those Ministers (in extracting the wealth of England) who maligned them. Indeed, had I not mentioned these facts by which these calumnies have been so clearly refuted, the absurdity of my being concerned in taking a paper to the Directory of France, by way of credentials, in 1798, who am now known to have formed an alliance with them two years before, in 1796, would alone be sufficient to carry conviction that I could not have had any part or concurrence in this infamous paper; besides, without arrogating much credit for composition, or falling into the folly or weakness of overweening, I may express my contempt of the style of the paper; and I trust every act of my life allows me to express my utter abhorrence of its contents. If, then, it must be admitted that it is so vile a production—that it was a credential which I could not have wanted, and that, if such a paper could have been of the least use, I could have composed one, when I had arrived on the Continent, more to my purpose, none but men determined against the clearest conviction, could believe that I had any part; concurrence or knowledge of this transaction, upon which the whole of the indictment was founded.

The

The next part of the evidence is, that I was of an open, unreserved disposition; and my having been so long and so deeply engaged in the Union, is the ground upon which this has been carped at. Much of my political life is known to the world—enough to enable the public to form its judgment....enough for me to appeal to. From the moment I perceived that my Countrymen were willing to sacrifice their religious rancour on the altar of National Freedom, I flung away every other consideration, and exerted every faculty of my soul to dispel the dæmon of Discord, and to cherish the spirit of Union. The emancipation and independence of Ireland from internal and external thralldom, were the objects I had in view. So early as 1795 I openly avowed my opinions, as may be seen in what fell from me on the Catholic question. These sentiments are to be found amongst others: “ But if you shall have convinced the People of Ireland, that you are traitors to them, and hirelings to an avaricious, domineering nation, under the outward appearance of a sister-country....if you shall have convinced the People of this country, that the free national constitution for which they were committed, and for which they risked every thing in 1782, has been destroyed by the bribery of a British Minister, and the unexampled venality of an Irish Parliament....if you shall have convinced them, that, instead of rising or falling with England, they are never to rise but when she is humbled by adversity, and that they must fall when she becomes elated by prosperity....if you shall have convinced the People of this country, that, instead of reciprocal advantage, nothing is to be reaped from their connexion with England but supremacy and aggrandizement on one side, and a costly venality, injury, insult, degradation and poverty on the other,—it is human nature, that you shall have driven the People of this country to try to court the alliance of any nation, able and willing to break the chains of a bondage not less galling to their feelings than restrictive of their prosperity.” When Union and Reform were made treason and death by new laws, agreeable to the sentiments I had openly avowed in 1795; I negotiated that very alliance with France in 1796, which I had declared was our only alternative; and when I had returned to Ireland, after having formed the alliance, you will find these words in my first address to the Electors

Electors of the county of Antrim: "If the monopoly of
 "the whole national representation by a few individuals
 "forms the basis of *their* constitution, and if the most pro-
 "fligate sale of that representation to the agents of another
 "country be the sole means by which it is moved and main-
 "tained, so far from seeking your confidence by promising
 "to support it, *I pledge myself to you and my Country, to*
 "*use every means in my power to effect its destruction.* Ca-
 "tholic and Protestant are alike convinced, that on the
 "Union of both depends the salvation of all. Those who
 "sell the rights of their country, will call this by the name
 "of that treason they live by committing; but if to pro-
 "mote the Union of Irishmen be treason, if to place the
 "liberties of my country upon its true Republican basis be
 "treason, then do I glory in being a traitor. It is a treason
 "I will seal with my blood, and that I hope to have en-
 "graved on my tomb. I know that an attempt on the
 "part of the Executive, to subvert our liberties, has sanc-
 "tioned one Revolution; and I feel, that if the Legisla-
 "tive, becoming more corrupt than the Executive, should
 "attempt a similar subversion, not only by force, but by
 "the more deadly corruption—they will have sanctioned
 "another." If these extracts from sentiments spoken and
 published at large, are not sufficient, in the circumstances
 under which I was placed, to entitle me to a character for
 frankness, I refer you to the whole of my second address to
 the Electors of the county of Antrim, in which I have openly
 asserted the right of forming an alliance with France; and
 if this be not sufficient, I refer you to the "STATE OF IRE-
 LAND" I published, in which I have justified resistance,
 and calling in foreign assistance. If those who read these
 avowals of my political principles before my trial at Maid-
 stone, before they knew of the part I was acting, thought
 me entitled to the character of an open, unreserved dispo-
 sition, let them read those avowals of my opinions and prin-
 ciples now that the thousand dangers, with which I was
 environed at the time they were written, have been made
 public—would they not be bound, *a fortiori*, to give me the
 same character over again?

The last part of the evidence, "that they looked upon
 me as professing the principles upon which the Revolution
 of 1688 was founded," is a matter of opinion. These
 principles are, the right of resisting oppression, and even of
 calling in foreign aid in supporting the right. That these

were my principles, I appeal to every act and word of my life. If my writings and speeches do not go to the proof, why did not the Crown Lawyers produce them? They could have brought evidence to prove they were mine; they found a manuscript copy of my second Address to the County of Antrim in my desk, when I was arrested in 1796; and they found two copies of my *STATE OF IRELAND*, when I was arrested at Margate in 1798. The fact, then, being admitted, how does the general assertion, that these were my principles as given in evidence, bind those who gave it, to any responsibility for the prudence, propriety or fitness with which I applied them. That the Opposition of England were United Irishmen, or that I made those men who, on a change of Ministry, must form the administration of England, acquainted with my design of separation, is too absurd to be mentioned by the most malignant calumniator, or to be credited by the most deludable dupe. The charge against me at Maidstone was wholly confined to England; Ireland, or its politics, were not mentioned in the indictment. Hence the Opposition were, not only not called on to give an opinion on any transaction relating to Ireland, but, if they had attempted to say a word on the subject, the Judge must have stopped them. In a word, that I have impeached one title of the evidence which was given at Maidstone, by any thing which has come from me, verbal or written, is so utterly false, that if I was to be tried over again, at this instant, on the former indictment, without subtracting a letter, and that every syllable I have since delivered was published, so far from retracting any part of the evidence they have given, they would be bound to declare my innocence of the whole charges in positive terms, which they gave only as a matter of opinion before: And as to the part I have acted in my own country, it would be now as it was at my trial—they would not be called on, or even suffered to give an opinion; nay, if all the reports of the Irish Parliament that ever were printed, with their appendices, were produced in evidence, they would not avail—for this plain reason—neither Ireland, nor a particle respecting it, are so much as mentioned in the indictment.

These remarks on what has fallen from me, as it respects the evidence given at Maidstone, must assure every man who has not shut his mind against all conviction, that
nothing

nothing ever has, or ever can, consistent with truth, come from me, which can impeach the credit of the great and good men in question. For the part I have taken in my own country, my acts shall be my vouchers; neither the force of foreign mercenaries, nor the corruption of traitors, nor the falsehood of ministers, nor the calumny of hired defamers, nor the torture of tyrants, can condemn me, as long as CONSCIOUS INTEGRITY finds a place in my heart. Disloyalty, rebellion and treason are confounded, by the mass of mankind, with the success that attends them; whilst, with the magnanimous, success conveys no acquittal, nor defeat condemnation. That the constitution contained some of the purest principles of Liberty, that they have been most violently assailed, that the assailants have been enormously criminal, and that they should be selected for exemplary justice, I have uniformly asserted;—then let those vital principles of the constitution be the standard, and let their violation be the criminal test. I ask but that the world should be informed of the part I have acted: there have been instances of virtue which might challenge the brightest page of the world; there have been crimes which cannot be equalled in the records of Hell: I demand a fair allotment of my share in a just distribution; and, with the claims of a calumniated man, I call on my calumniators for publication, not only by the imprescriptible right of self-defence, but by the right of express stipulation. The whole of what has been delivered by me, verbal and written, fills one hundred pages, of which only one has been published: Publish the ninety-nine which have been suppressed; and when the world are informed of the crimes I have detailed, the criminals I have exposed, and the principles upon which I have acted, then let them judge whether I have had recourse to resistance and to foreign aid, against the constitution, or against racks, tortures, lashings, half-hangings, burning houses, rape, military execution, bastiles, free quarters, and every species of oppression! If these ninety-nine pages contain falsehoods, why have I not been exposed by their being published? If they contain confessions of conscious guilt, contrition, or humbly imploring of mercy, why are they not published? If these pages do not contain unanswerable charges against the King's Ministers, if they contain any thing that can be tortured into their justification, and, above all, if they contain

a syllable that impeaches the credit of the Opposition of England, is it credible that they would not have been published? Give them; every line, to the world; and if they contain a thought which the man who loves his species can disclaim, if they contain dereliction of my principles, breach of my engagements, treason to my cause or my country, or perfidy to my friends, let me be overwhelmed by the infamy attendant on instant exposure. You dare not! Like the witless bird, you hide your head, and think you have escaped detection. When it is known that, of one hundred pages, ninety-nine have been kept back, are you so weak as to imagine that any other reason will be assigned than that your own crimes have made you suppress them? Can the silliest dotard suppose that you have broken your solemn engagements, and held out those Septemberizing menaces in Lord Cornwallis's name, to prevent the publication of those ninety-nine pages, if they contained a particle that could criminate me, or impeach the honor of the Opposition of England? No! they will surmise the truth; they will be convinced that you have uttered falsehoods, that you have given grounds for calumny, that you have deceived the Parliament, and that you have prostituted the name of a man of honor, to most infamous, murderous menace, and to most dishonourable breaches of the most solemn engagements.

So truly Protean have you been with the State Prisoners, from the beginning of this transaction to this instant, that I am wholly at a loss to find any two parts of your conduct, which have any accordance with truth, with each other, or with the agreement. Immediately after we had performed our parts of the conditions, and before a sense of your dishonorable conduct induced you to violate your's, you clearly perceived, that, by the compact, we had reserved a choice of country for exile, and that we had not excluded ourselves from passing into any country on the globe that was not at war with Great Britain; you were convinced, that, by your own stipulation "that we should not pass into an enemy's country," it is implied that we were to emigrate during the war, while there was a country to come within your exemption; nor had you yet forgotten all those professions of liberal construction, good faith and honor, of which you had been so lavish. In this mood you sent Mr. Cooke to our prison, on the 18th of August, with a fair construction of
the

the compact verbal and written, that we were to emigrate to any country not at war with Great Britain ; on the 16th of September you sent Mr. Marsden to inform us, that we should be detained during the war ; on the 21st of October you again informed us by Mr. Cooke, that we should emigrate to America, and not be suffered to pass into any other country whatever ; on the 22d, the very next day, you sent Mr. Marsden to tell us, we should not be suffered to go to America ; on the 5th of December you again sent Mr. Marsden to tell us, that all the State Prisoners might emigrate to any country on the continent not at war with Great Britain, with the exception of fifteen, who were to be further detained ; and although more than a month has elapsed since this fifth interpretation of the agreement, and that many of the non-excepted have demanded to be suffered to emigrate, they are still prevented from leaving the prison : and whilst I am writing this Letter, it will not surprise me if you should send a sixth interpretation of the agreement, as contradictory to the whole as those you have sent are to each other. But to what end shall I waste time in reciting any more of your conduct ? The man who has shewn a total contempt for truth and good faith in one hundred instances, would betray the same in one thousand. Then, setting aside every idea of the existence of the agreement, in which equivalents and terms are set forth ; setting aside all those professions of liberal construction and good faith ; leaving you to reconcile your plea of necessity with non-performance of compact, for which stipulated equivalents have been religiously paid ; I call on you to reconcile those manifold contradictions and prevarications, which have appeared in your various interpretations of the agreement, with justice and honor, which can be but one.

You would have been happy, no doubt, that I had implicated Lord Cornwallis and the Parliament with you in this accusation : but in this you shall find yourself widely mistaken ; for, much as you have defamed and deceived me, and vilely as you have attempted to furnish grounds for calumny against the Opposition of England, your conduct to Lord Cornwallis and the Parliament are not less flagrant. Detected of such manifest breaches of truth in the outset of your ministerial career, the flagrance of your perfidy forms the strongest evidence that you are the sole author of those disgraceful transactions which I have detail-
ed ;

ed; whilst the unimpeached character for incorruptible integrity which Lord Cornwallis has uniformly supported in some of the most trying situations, carries as forcible evidence that he has not debased himself thus suddenly to so low and so vile a degree. As to the Parliament, you, and you only, could have furnished the statements upon which their proceedings were founded; and that you did not lay the written agreement before them, is manifest from the debate on our Advertisement, when some of the Members declared, on the second day, that their having seen General Nugent's publication of our agreement, wherein it was stated that we had stipulated "not to implicate any person whatever by naming or describing," induced them to alter the opinions they had expressed on the preceding day, when they had not been informed of those conditions. Wholly acquitting Lord Cornwallis, and not interfering in any wise with the Parliament of Ireland, without saying one word of the future, I have accused you, in the face of the world, as a Minister who has uttered the most gross falsehoods of me; that you have entered into engagements, for the performance of which you have pledged the faith of Lord Cornwallis's administration; and that you have been guilty of the most direct violations of your agreement, attended with all those shifts, subterfuges, contradictions and prevarications, to which the honest man can never be driven, and from which the cunning, pitiful, unprincipled courtier, can never be free. I have impeached you of keeping back from the Parliament that written agreement to which you had pledged the Executive Government; and of furnishing the Officers of the Crown with materials for a law in violation of the letter and spirit of those very conditions to which you had bound it. I have impeached you for having prostituted the name of a man, whose honor was unquestioned before you had profaned it, by setting it to a menace the most infernal, whether it be considered for its injustice, in attempting to silence men (whose honor you had attacked) by placing the dagger to their throats to prevent them from justifying their characters by that publication for which I had expressly conditioned; or whether it be considered for its style of more than Robespierian butchery, in threatening to take the lives of eighty-nine for the *crime* of one, and that no other than the *crime* of exposing your perfidy, and of vindicating their honor. Then let me be that criminal!

—mark

—mark me for your victim!—for if to declare to the world that you have most foully belied me, and that these falsehoods have been made the grounds for calumny against the most honorable men, be the forfeit of life, I have no desire to live. If it has come to this, that to contradict the falsehoods of a Minister be a capital offence—if every Tyro in office is to be erected into a Bey or a Bashaw in these times of blood, life is not worth the keeping. If I cannot live with honor, nay, if I cannot live but loaded with infamy, and to be made the stalking beast for the assassination of the fair fame of my best benefactors, it is time for me to die. You knew I demanded a trial—you knew I demanded not to be required to sign any agreement; and yet you have told the world that I have *most humbly implored pardon!* You knew I asserted my principles, and vindicated the cause I espoused, in the worst of times—you knew you had required of me to retract this assertion and vindication, and that I refused to do either; yet you have told the world, “*that I have confessed myself conscious of the most flagrant and enormous guilt, and expressed my contrition!*” You knew, that, of ninety State Prisoners, six only have been examined—that these six have not, in the most distant degree, *confessed conscious guilt or contrition, or humbly implored pardon,* and that the eighty-four have never been asked a question; yet you have told the Parliament, that *every one* of the ninety have made the like *confessions of guilt and contrition,* and have alike *humbly implored pardon!* You knew that the written compact contained a stipulation, that the country to which we were to emigrate “was to be mutually agreed on between us and the Government;” yet you have told the Parliament, “that we had conditioned to be transported to such foreign country as to the King shall seem meet!” You knew that I had expressly declared, that my Brother would not enter into any conditions with the Government; yet you have first attempted to terrify him into your measures, by sending the very Mute you had sent me, and, when this was treated with the contempt it deserved, you took advantage of our separation to try to make him believe that I had promised he should enter into conditions! You knew that I had expressly conditioned for the right of publishing every part of the information I might give, conformably to my agreement, and also of refuting calumnies—you knew that this right had been
 recognized

recognized by your colleague Mr. Cooke, some time after we made our agreement ; yet you have not only violated this important condition, but you have added to the sufferings of a prison, and held out your murderous menace ! You knew that you had conditioned that we should emigrate after we had performed our part of the compact ; and, now that our's has been faithfully discharged, you have set up a plea of necessity, which is equally valid for detaining us for life as for an hour, and equally reconcileable with your contradictory interpretations and shameful prevarications !

These are a small part of the catalogue of breaches of faith, honor and truth, of which I accuse you. As to what concerns the written agreement, compare it with the law which you were pledged should be in perfect conformity with its spirit and letter, and for which you were bound to furnish the matter for the Parliament to go by ; yet I will submit to be branded for the most infamous liar, if this law is not a most gross violation of the agreement, which, the Chancellor declared, " the Government that could violate, neither could stand, nor deserved to stand." But, though there had not been one of those express stipulations, or those dishonorable infractions, should I have forfeited every right of Humanity, should I have borne with every falsehood, and every calumny, malice and perfidy have poured out against me ? No ! I should still retain the imprescriptible right of self-defence,....that right with which God and Nature have armed every man, and of which no power on earth can deprive him. Let it cost what it may, I will rescue those honorable men from the calumny for which you have held me out as having furnished the matter. The means which have been hitherto used to dispatch me, leave me no doubt of what I have to expect. The solemn declaration of COIGLEY (in the presence of persons of the first credit) of the proposal conveyed by the *Reverend* Griffiths, for saving his life, and the giving up mine, gives some idea of the justice I have any hope of obtaining. Abandon those underhand means....spare your murderous menace.... send me your Mutes ! The same necessity which can justify your detaining me a prisoner for life, will equally justify you for my murder, and infinitely more than for my calumniation. The man who has lived in constant habits of intimacy with Death for these last three years, had

had he been the veriest coward, must now be familiar with his most ghastly appearance : not a night that he has not sat perched on my pillow, —not a step have I taken that he has not walked by my side—not a thought nor an act that was not directed to what, I was convinced, was the good of my Country, and not a thought nor an act that did not forfeit my life, by the code, martial and civil, to which my Country has been made subject. My prison is the mansion of Death — its inmates in succession are dragged to the gallows—its porch is the scaffold, and the hangman is amongst my attendants ; yet you imagine you can infuse terror by your dastardly menace ! Do not yourself such injustice ; you have not prepared me so ill for the language of the assassin, or the executioner's gripe.

Torn myself from the loved, adored, chosen friends of my heart, is there a fibre that can link the parent to his child, the wife to her husband, children to their parents or to one another, that I have not seen torn asunder by the ruffian hand of ruthless power, in those different prisons of misery where I am doomed to pass the vigour of life ? Is there an insult you or your underlings have not practised ? Is there an alleviation, of which you have not sought to deprive me ? One only comfort I had left—I shared the prison of the TWIN BROTHER of my soul—I shared his sorrows for the sufferings of his loved Wife and his eight infant innocents, scattered by marshalled blood-hounds, who have plundered his house, ravaged his demesne, and destroyed his property, one hundred miles distant from the pretext of revolt : When the tear started for his absent, helpless Children, or for his beloved Country, I could press him to my heart and wipe away the bitter drops from his manly face, or alleviate his sorrows by making commonage of our feelings, our affections, and our sufferings. This is the Brother whose crimes are his talents, his virtues, and love of the People—for whom an acquittal serves but to prolong your cruelties and his persecutions. Bereft of this last, this only comfort I had left—familiarized not only with death, but with its most sublimated horrors—trust me, there is no terror in your threats. Beloved, faithful Countrymen ! have you, with a fidelity unparalleled in the annals of the world, preserved my life in defiance of torture, that I should drag it along in a dungeon, loaded with chains and infamy, for the mere sufferance of respiration.

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You, whose discoloured faces, and swollen tongues hanging from your mouths, scarcely able to receive sustenance for the support of existence, describing the stranglings you have endured more feelingly than eloquence could utter! and you, whose flesh has been torn from your bones by lashings, and torn again before it had been cicatrized! have you borne all (when but to have sighed my name in the ravings of your tortures, you would have been cherished as the saviours of your country) that I should breathe but by the bounty of calumniators. And you, dear, venerated, departed friends! have you taught me, by your example, to balance between death and infamy; you have been made exiles from the world; I have submitted to be exiled from our beloved Ireland—Let him that loves his country, estimate the difference.

You may imagine that justice has been silenced by the storm which has raged, and in your triumphant course you may revive the ancient law which makes the murder of mere Irishmen justifiable homicide: I am indeed a *mere Irishman*, the country knows me to be nothing else: like * Williams and Lawrence, you may confess the fact, and plead the CUSTOM; a host of precedents, in six hundred years, will bear you out—But not so fast;—returning calm may one day bring the reign of reason back; the man who “smears the sleepy grooms” will find “there is no sure foundation set on blood.” A few designing villians may delude; they cannot with the like success betray.

At any time, justice to myself, and to those venerated men you have attempted to defame, would call for the disclosure I have made; but now, when ministerial confidence has become the wicked and destructive jargon of the day, it is a duty I owe my Country to give a true and faithful picture of the honor your ministerial integrity affords. If the time should ever come, when a treacherous advantage of our cruel disunion might be taken, by a desperate effort to destroy even the shadow of our national independence, and erase this great and powerful island from the list of nations...if, adding insults to injury, equivalents should be

* Sir John Davis cites the records of these two cases, to prove that the murder of the Irish People by the English was a legal act. Williams confessed the murder, but proved the man he murdered was a mere Irishman.—Williams was acquitted.—Lawrence set up the same plea; but it appeared, the man he murdered was an Englishman—Lawrence was hanged.

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talked of for what is beyond all value, and that to dole out as charity the thousand part of rights which God and Nature gave us shall be called equivalents....if enormous burdens should be added, that we shall be told they are meant for our relief; and if, in this monstrous project, you should hold a ministerial station, let your conduct towards me be the earnest of your conduct to the nation. Let me be banished to the most distant pole....you cannot eradicate the love of Country from my heart: Country is my God; upon its altar I could offer up, not only fortune, not only life.... I can do more....I can sacrifice revenge. Had the dreadful list of those beloved friends, whom I shall mourn while I live, been greater than it is....had the profusion of my own particular blood been so abundant that I were left the last of mine own race....did my sufferings equal, for exceed they could not, the most excruciating tortures which have been inflicted throughout all Innisfail....*if the salvation of our Island were at stake*, I would stretch out one arm to grasp the bloody hands of my deluded, maddened, betrayed Countrymen, point the other to our common parent, and, in the deliverance of our common Country, bury all remembrance of the past; while mutual tears of bitterest grief, sorrow, and regret, should wash away all memory, of how all former blood had flowed. Add these to my crimes, and let the exposure of your guilt be one. The more clearly I have depicted you, the more vindictive your revenge. What I value, and which I now defend, is above your reach: Power is not tempered to pierce the shield which Honesty can forge ...put Character upon its trial; no Jury can be packed ...the Patriots who have ever lived are duly summoned to attend, and Time records the verdict. The Patriots of Greece and Rome, the RUSSELS, SYDNEYS, HAMPDENS, and ROGER MOORE, the Patriots of Helvetia, of Batavia, of America, have all been branded Traitors, in the days they lived; but Posterity has done them justice.—Patience, KOSCIUSKO! your beloved Poland has been partitioned by the ruffian robbers who have shed her blood: Justice has but slept....ten years, nay, not five have yet elapsed: “Time is the old Justice that examines all such offenders.” Character is never fairly before the world until the owner is no more. While I live, though it be within the precincts of the scaffold, I will vindicate my honor, I will
raise

raise my voice from the depths of my dungeon ; and when I shall have discharged the last debt my Country can expect, or I can pay—the world will do me justice.

Young Lord ! I sought you not : you have grappled with my honor upon these troubled waters ; if your's shall have perished, blame your own temerity. Mark but the smallest shade in any charge I have made against you, that is not grounded in the brightest truth ; and I will feel more pleasure (if possible) in retracting it, than I have felt pain in travelling through the long and shameful history of your dishonour. Those who know me best, will acquit me of the despondent, gloomy mind, which likes to dwell on human nature's dark, deformed side ; whilst those who know me least and hate me most, shall seek in vain for grounds for deformation. Had your offences been those of folly, of inexperience, of ignorance, or of inordinate presumption, the pompous empty carriage of the man should have ensured your acquittal ; but vacant indeed must be the mind that cannot mark the strong and glaring lines which separate truth from falsehood, honor from infamy, and faith from perfidy. Convince me that you are guiltless,....that I am in an error ; and I will do you justice : But with these strong impressions of strong conviction on my mind, I can subscribe myself with no other sentiment than that which arises from a mixture of pity and contempt.

ARTHUR O'CONNOR.

*From my Prison,
January 4th, 1799.*

